

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/909,537

Examiner

Philip J. Chea

Applicant(s)

MATHEWSON ET AL.

Art Unit

2153

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to an RCE filed May 14, 2007.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-4, 7, 9-12, 14-16, 18-20 and 22-24.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 - * Certified copies not received: _____.

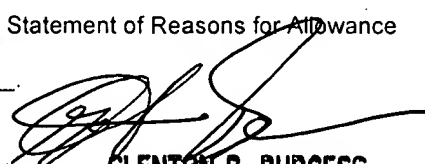
Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material

5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413);
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____


GLENTON B. BURGESS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100

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EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Marcia Doubet on 7/16/07.

The application has been amended as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS: Please see attached.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The closest prior art Johnson et al. (US 5,325,310) shows that a recipient of an electronic mail object is prompted for a specific response in response to the recipient opening an electronic mail object and is prohibited from performing a selected action until the specific response has been entered by the recipient. However, the prior art fails to teach or render obvious each and every limitation claimed. Specifically, determining whether a hierarchy of recipient notification techniques has been defined for various intervals of the time-sensitivity, and automatically rendering a time-sensitive marked message using an application adapted for processing the message, and the recipient will be prevented from performing other actions with the application until the recipient provides a response to the message, within a time period of the time-sensitivity and automatically starting execution of an application for the rendering, and automatically bring a window rendered by the application to a foreground of a display and making the window active.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Philip J. Chea whose telephone number is 571-272-3951. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 6:30-4:00 (1st Friday Off).

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Burgess can be reached on 571-272-3949. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Philip J Chea
Examiner
Art Unit 2153

PJC 3/6/07

Proposed Examiner's Amendment to the Claims

1 Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of handling time-sensitive messages, comprising steps of:
2 marking a message, by a creator thereof, as time-sensitive;
3 sending the marked message from a computing device of the creator to a computing
4 device of a recipient for whom the message was created, such that after the marked message is
5 received at the computing device of the recipient, it will be processed by:
6 determining that the marked message is marked as being time-sensitive and that a
7 time period of the time-sensitivity has been reached but not exceeded;
8 determining whether a hierarchy of recipient notification techniques has been
9 defined for various intervals of the time-sensitivity, and if so, performing steps of:
10 determining an applicable one of the various intervals that corresponds to a
11 current time;
12 selecting one of the recipient notification techniques which corresponds to
13 the determined one of the various intervals; and
14 notifying the recipient of the marked message using the selected recipient
15 notification technique; and
16 automatically rendering the marked message to the recipient using an application
17 adapted for processing the message within a time period of the time-sensitivity, further comprising
18 steps of:
19 automatically starting execution of the application, at the computing device
20 of the recipient, if the execution of the application is not currently started;
21 automatically bringing a window rendered by the application to a

22 foreground of a display of the computing device and making the window active;
23 automatically rendering the marked message in the active window; and
24 requiring the recipient to take action with the marked message before
25 performing any other tasks with the application[[; and]] by preventing the recipient from
26 performing other actions with the application until the recipient provides a response to the marked
27 message; and
28 automatically receiving a reply from the recipient, sent from the computing device of the
29 recipient to the computing device of the creator following the recipient's response thereto.

1 Claim 2 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the marking step
2 further comprises indicating, by the creator, that snoozing is allowed by the recipient for this
3 message, such that the recipient will be allowed to temporarily delay the response to the rendered
4 message for a time that remains within the time period of the time-sensitivity.

1 Claim 3 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the marking step
2 further comprises indicating, by the creator, an ending time for the time period of the time-
3 sensitivity of the message.

1 Claim 4 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 3, wherein the marking step
2 further comprises indicating, by the creator, a starting time for the time period of the time-
3 sensitivity of the message.

Claims 5 - 6 (canceled)

1 Claim 7 (currently amended): A method of improving electronic communications, comprising
2 steps of:

3 receiving a plurality of electronic messages at a computing device of a recipient to whom
4 the electronic messages are addressed; [[and]]

5 determining whether a selected one of the received electronic messages is marked as being
6 time-sensitive; and

7 if the determining step has a positive result and a time period of the time-sensitivity has
8 been reached but not exceeded, processing the selected one of the received electronic messages,
9 further comprising steps of:

10 determining whether a hierarchy of recipient notification techniques has been
11 defined for various intervals of the time-sensitivity, and if so, performing steps of:

12 determining an applicable one of the various intervals that corresponds to a
13 current time;

14 selecting one of the recipient notification techniques which corresponds to
15 the determined one of the various intervals; and

16 notifying the recipient of the selected one of the received electronic
17 messages using the selected recipient notification technique; and

18 automatically rendering the selected one of the received electronic messages to the
19 recipient in an application adapted for processing the selected one of the received electronic
20 messages within the time period of the time-sensitivity, further comprising steps of:

21 automatically starting execution of the application, at the computing device
22 of the recipient, if the execution of the application is not currently started;
23 automatically bringing a window rendered by the application to a
24 foreground of a display of the computing device and making the window active;
25 automatically rendering the selected one of the received electronic
26 messages in the active window; and
27 requiring the recipient to take action with the selected one of the received
28 electronic messages before performing any other tasks with the application[[; and]] by preventing
29 the recipient from performing other actions with the application until the recipient provides a
30 response to the selected one of the received electronic messages within the time period of the
31 time-sensitivity.

Claim 8 (canceled)

1 Claim 9 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the processing step
2 further comprises the steps of:

3 determining whether snoozing is allowed for the selected one of the received electronic
4 messages; and

5 if so, allowing the recipient to delay the response to the selected one of the received
6 electronic messages until a later time, wherein the later time remains within the time period of the
7 time-sensitivity.

1 Claim 10 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the processing step
2 further comprises the steps of:

3 determining whether snoozing is allowed for the selected one of the received electronic
4 messages; and

5 if so, suppressing the preventing step only while (1) a starting time of the time period has
6 been reached and (2) an ending time of the time period has not been reached.

1 Claim 11 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 7, further comprising the step
2 of:

3 sending a notification of the response to a computing device of a creator of the rendered
4 selected one.

1 Claim 12 (original): The method according to Claim 7, further comprising the step of determining
2 whether processing of the rendered selected one is complete, and if not, remembering the
3 rendered selected one for subsequent evaluation at a later time, wherein the later time is within the
4 time period of the time-sensitivity.

Claim 13 (canceled)

1 Claim 14 (original): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the electronic messages are e-
2 mail messages.

1 Claim 15 (original): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the electronic messages are
2 electronic calendar events.

1 Claim 16 (original): The method according to Claim 7, wherein the electronic messages are to-do
2 items.

Claim 17 (canceled)

1 Claim 18 (currently amended): A system for handling time-sensitive messages, comprising:
2 means for marking a message, by a creator thereof, as time-sensitive;
3 means for sending the marked message from a computing device of the creator to a
4 computing device of a recipient for whom the message was created, such that after the marked
5 message is received at the computing device of the recipient, it will be processed by:
6 determining that the marked message is marked as being time-sensitive and that a
7 time period of the time-sensitivity has been reached but not exceeded;
8 determining whether a hierarchy of recipient notification techniques has been
9 defined for various intervals of the time-sensitivity, and if so, performing steps of:
10 determining an applicable one of the various intervals that corresponds to a
11 current time;
12 selecting one of the recipient notification techniques which corresponds to
13 the determined one of the various intervals; and
14 notifying the recipient of the marked message using the selected recipient

notification technique; and

automatically rendering the marked message to the recipient using an application adapted for processing the message within a time period of the time-sensitivity, further comprising:

automatically starting execution of the application, at the computing device of the recipient, if the execution of the application is not currently started;

automatically bringing a window rendered by the application to a foreground of a display of the computing device and making the window active;

automatically rendering the marked message in the active window; and

requiring the recipient to take action with the marked message before

performing any other tasks with the application[[: and]] by preventing the recipient from

performing other actions with the application until the recipient provides a response to the marked message; and

means for automatically receiving a reply from the recipient, sent from the computing device of the recipient to the computing device of the creator following the recipient's response.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 18, wherein the marking means further comprises means for indicating, by the creator, an ending time for the time period of the time-sensitivity of the message.

Claim 20 (currently amended): A system for improving electronic communications, comprising:
means for receiving a plurality of electronic messages at a computing device of a recipient

3 to whom the electronic messages are addressed;

4 means for determining, at the computing device, whether a selected one of the received
5 electronic messages is marked as being time-sensitive; and

6 means for processing the selected one if the means for determining has a positive result
7 and a time period of the time-sensitivity has been reached but not exceeded, further comprising:

8 means for determining whether a hierarchy of recipient notification techniques has
9 been defined for various intervals of the time-sensitivity, and if so, means for using the hierarchy
10 by:

11 determining an applicable one of the various intervals that corresponds to a
12 current time;

13 selecting one of the recipient notification techniques which corresponds to
14 the determined one of the various intervals; and

15 notifying the recipient of the selected one of the received electronic
16 messages using the selected recipient notification technique; and

17 means for automatically rendering the selected one of the received electronic
18 messages to the recipient in an application adapted for processing the selected one of the received
19 electronic messages within the time period of the time-sensitivity by:

20 automatically starting execution of the application, at the computing device
21 of the recipient, if the execution of the application is not currently started;

22 automatically bringing a window rendered by the application to a
23 foreground of a display of the computing device and making the window active;

24 automatically rendering the selected one of the received electronic

25 messages in the active window; and
26 requiring the recipient to take action with the selected one of the received
27 electronic messages before performing any other tasks with the application[[; and]] by means for
28 preventing the recipient from performing other actions with the application until the recipient
29 provides a response to the selected one of the received electronic messages within the time period
30 of the time-sensitivity.

Claim 21 (canceled)

1 Claim 22 (currently amended): A computer program product for handling time-sensitive
2 messages, the computer program product embodied on one or more computer-readable media and
3 comprising:

4 computer-readable program code for marking a message, by a creator thereof, as time-
5 sensitive;

6 computer-readable program code for sending the marked message from a computing
7 device of the creator to a computing device of a recipient for whom the message was created,
8 such that after the marked message is received at the computing device of the recipient, it will be
9 processed by:

10 determining that the marked message is marked as being time-sensitive and that a
11 time period of the time-sensitivity has been reached but not exceeded;

12 determining whether a hierarchy of recipient notification techniques has been
13 defined for various intervals of the time-sensitivity, and if so, performing steps of:

14 determining an applicable one of the various intervals that corresponds to a
15 current time;

16 selecting one of the recipient notification techniques which corresponds to
17 the determined one of the various intervals; and

18 notifying the recipient of the marked message using the selected recipient
19 notification technique; and

20 automatically rendering the marked message to the recipient using an application
21 adapted for processing the message within a time period of the time-sensitivity, further
22 comprising:

23 automatically starting execution of the application, at the computing device
24 of the recipient, if the execution of the application is not currently started;

25 automatically bringing a window rendered by the application to a
26 foreground of a display of the computing device and making the window active;

27 automatically rendering the marked message in the active window; and

28 requiring the recipient to take action with the marked message before
29 performing any other tasks with the application[[: and]] by preventing the recipient from
30 performing other actions with the application until the recipient provides a response to the marked
31 message; and

32 computer-readable program code for automatically receiving a reply from the recipient,
33 sent from the computing device of the recipient to the computing device of the creator following
34 the recipient's response thereto.

1 Claim 23 (previously presented): The computer program product according to Claim 22, wherein
2 the computer-readable program code for marking further comprises computer-readable program
3 code for indicating, by the creator, an ending time for the time period of the time-sensitivity of the
4 message.

1 Claim 24 (currently amended): A computer program product for improving electronic
2 communications, the computer program product embodied on one or more computer-readable
3 media and comprising:

4 computer-readable program code for receiving a plurality of electronic messages at a
5 computing device of a recipient to whom the electronic messages are addressed;

6 computer-readable program code for determining, at the computing device, whether a
7 selected one of the received electronic messages is marked as being time-sensitive, and if so,
8 whether a time period of the time-sensitivity has been reached but not exceeded; and

9 computer-readable program code for processing the selected one when the computer-
10 readable program code has a positive result, further comprising computer-readable program code
11 for:

12 determining whether a hierarchy of recipient notification techniques has been
13 defined for various intervals of the time-sensitivity, and if so, performing steps of:

14 determining an applicable one of the various intervals that corresponds to a
15 current time;

16 selecting one of the recipient notification techniques which corresponds to
17 the determined one of the various intervals; and

18 notifying the recipient of the selected one of the received electronic
19 messages using the selected recipient notification technique; and
20 ~~computer-readable program code for~~ automatically rendering the selected one of
21 the received electronic messages to the recipient in an application adapted for processing the
22 selected one within the time period of the time-sensitivity, further comprising:
23 automatically starting execution of the application, at the computing device
24 of the recipient, if the execution of the application is not currently started;
25 automatically bringing a window rendered by the application to a
26 foreground of a display of the computing device and making the window active;
27 automatically rendering the selected one of the received electronic
28 messages in the active window; and
29 requiring the recipient to take action with the selected one of the received
30 electronic messages before performing any other tasks with the application[[: and]] by computer-
31 ~~readable program code for~~ preventing the recipient from performing other actions with the
32 application until the recipient provides a response to the selected one of the received electronic
33 messages within the time period of the time-sensitivity.

Claims 25 - 26 (canceled)